



FRIENDS OF WARRANDYTE STATE PARK

FEBRUARY **NEWSLETTER** 1988

Glen Jameson 8442395

Hello for the New Year. Its been a busy summer with all sorts of things happening in the local environmental scene, but first let us recap on last year, which on attendance figures was our most successful year.

LAST MEETING



AG.M.

Thirty Friends attended the A.G.M. & B.B.Q. at Stane Brae, including some Friends from the Wurundjeri Tribe. It was an absolutely beauty bonza day & despite being ... led astray by Glens faulty directions, we eventually made it to the Stane Brae beach to gorge ourselves & relax. The kids splashed in the shallows & the rest of us passed around the newly finished Friends scrap book to see if we got our photos in it. Val Polley was there to tell us how the Management plan was going, & Pat Fricker from the M.M.B.W. Yarra Valley Park also joined us. The rangers as usual set up the Barbie & had things going for us by the time we arrived.

Our great thanks to the Ranger staff who again gave us excellent support through the year. Special thanks to all the Friends who attended throughout the year & gave their committmant to practical help in the environment.

NEXT MEETING...28th FEB.

We return to Stane Brae to do a little Tree planting & weed removal on the beach. Since we use the beach every year, I think we should contribute to its upkeep, plus it will be all the more pleasant each year we return. Norm Hunter found an aboriginal scraping tool in the sand when we were there which leads us to the next speaker to visit us & that will



At the A.G.M.
Winifred,
Glen, Norm
Hunter &
daughters
In the back
ground, Ian,
olive &
margaret

photo by
Doug Seymour

be Chris West from the Victorian Archaeological Survey. V.A.S. are a Government department who go out into the field & record sites of Aboriginal significance. Chris will be searching V.A.S. records for us to see what data they have on local aboriginal sites & generally inform us on the fascinating detective work they do to bring the past closer to us. Maybe Chris will have some information on the archaeological dig going on in the city at the moment.... see you at noon...we will drive down to the beach after gaining access from Stane Brae Court, which is off Jumping Creek RD. between Hoopers & Hartley Rd. Please close the gate after you.

VISIT FROM THE PAST

To help visualize our past, an Aboriginal Stone Axehead, found in the locality will be brought along to the meeting. Chris West has already inspected it & recorded it for the V.A.S. & Norm Hunter has looked at it as a representative of the Wurundjeri people. Chris confirmed that the stone came from the quarry at Mt. William near Lancefield. The type of stone is called Greenstone, a dense, heavy stone that after two days work produces a very durable axe. The stone was traded as a blank within the Tribal trade route of the Kulin Nation. This was a confederation of Tribes that roughly lived in a radius of 100 kilometres of Port Phillip Bay.

Stone axeheads from the same quarry have been found in S.A. & into N.S.W. Axes that have been found along the Murray River from the quarry have been little more than the size of a match box, having been ground down so often. The one that you will see is quite a large one in comparison & was found during a driveway construction in Mopoke Crt., Warrandyte. The Historical Society also have possession of one found very near the other, I hope to bring this along for comparison.

Axe heads were thought to be of great ceremonial importance & were as much a prized possession as a useful tool.

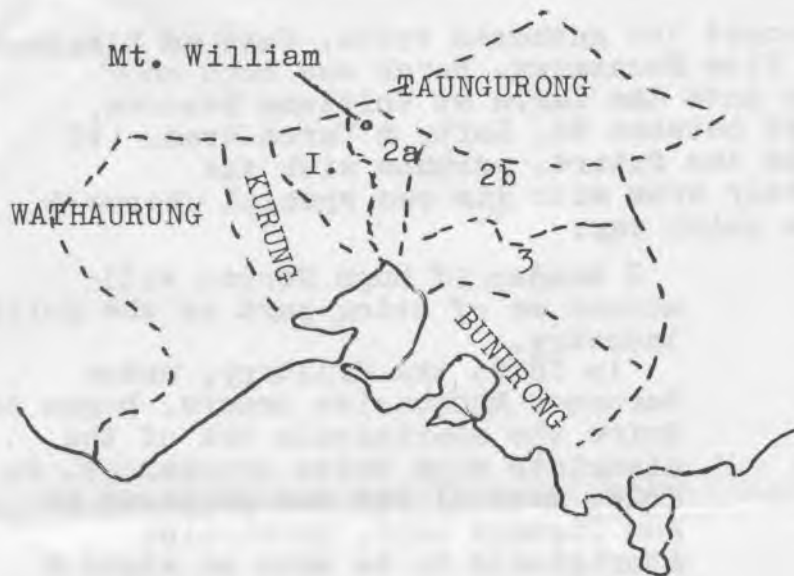
Stone was quarried by a method of lighting a fire on top of the stone face & when the stone was hot, water was poured on to it thereby cracking the stone. Sticks were forced into the cracks & the procedure repeated. As the stone flaked off the slabs were collected & traded as blanks. Once in the possession of the Tribe, the rough stone would begin to be ground down around the camp with grinding chores. When it was needed, it would be taken down to some grinding rocks on the Yarra or local creek and it would get its final shaping, a process that would require two days diligent work. The axe would then be used for removing bark from trees for canoes & coolamons, or chopping down trees & a multitude of uses. Close examination of the axe head gives plenty of clues as to its use.

Five Tribes shared the Port Phillip area, with their own distinct areas but tied together with Tribal kinship & ceremonial relationships. Central Melbourne was an important meeting area for the



photo courtesy of Paul Bof

Tribal Areas of the Port Phillip Area



WOIWURUNG CLANS

1. Boi-berrit
- 2a Kurnaje-berreing
- 2b Kurnaje-berreing
3. Wurundjeri

Kulin peoples, who were made up of the Tribes mapped above. The map comes from Gary Presland who has written an excellent book on the Melbourne Aboriginals called 'Land of the Kulin' (I think?). Still available locally & well worth the money.

Just as the land flows down from the Great Dividing Ranges towards Port Phillip Bay, so were the aboriginal people drawn to the Melbourne area for ceremony & corroboree. Shirley Wiencke in 'When the Wattles Bloom Again' (a story on William Barak, the last full blood aboriginal of the Yarra tribes) describes a scene in early Melbourne.

The tribal corroborees, to the white settlers, were an awesome spectacle. One new arrival, Richard Howitt, never forgot his first corroboree. One evening, soon after his arrival, he was amazed to see hundreds of people crossing the River from the more settled areas, & heading south towards Emerald Hill where two Aboriginal tribes were gathering... Aboriginals were everywhere, & the nights were split asunder by the sound of corroborees & fights between rival tribes. Nearly every night a corroboree was gone through with all its ...accompaniments of music, beaten by the lubras on possum rugs, & songs of excitement.

... (Howitt wrote)..There is something in the corroboree unimaginably wild & grotesque; celebrated as it is by night in the presence of vast fires; their dusty painted figures mingling oddly; their wild gesticulations & uncouth voices, modulated to suit savage (?) ears, in the strong glaring light & the dense darkness'.



Wouldn't mind going to one myself, it sounds great!

Perhaps Barak was amongst the gathered tribe. Just as Blaxland, Wentworth & Lawson crossed the Blue Mountains, Barak was born on Brush Creek. Brushy Creek runs into the Yarra at Whittens Reserve, which is part of Warrandyte Park between Mt. Lofty & Yarra Brae. (WE should do some planting there in the future, perhaps with the Wurundjeri people.) It is a lovely area with its own special charms & feeling of place. Visit it on a quiet day.



Barak, on the banks of
the Yarra Yarra

I wonder if Hugh Morgan will accuse me of being part of the guilt industry.

In 1816, the Military, under Governor Macquaries orders, began to drive the aboriginals out of the districts with white settlement. In 1828, martial law was declared in Van Diemens Land, permitting Aborigines to be shot on sight & parties were sent out to capture as many as possible.

Barak was 11 years old when Batman visited Port Phillip Bay. Here are his words... 'I never forgot it. I remember Buckley's words every time Captain Cook landed at Western Port. Then Batman came in looking for the country. Looking around the sea he found a lot of Blacks other side of Gealong, & found Buckley in the camp. Know trousers, all raggerty; he wore opossum rugs, & he fetch him back to Batmans house... Buckley told the Blacks to look at Batmans face..&.. any man that you see out in the bush not to touch him... If you kill one white man, white fella will shoot you down like a Kangaroo. A lot of white fellows come here by & by & clear the scub all over the country'...

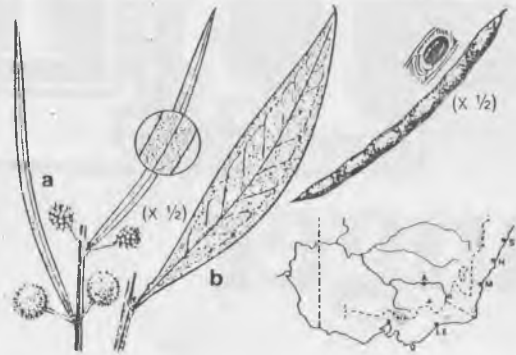
& so they did & the Tribes were forced from their lands & given reserves, like the land that is now the Botanical Gardens. Then they were shifted to CORANDERRK, near Healsville.

Shirley Wiencke writes 'Apart from drink & disease & inter tribal fighting, a chief cause (in their population decline) was the loss of desire to live & reproduce. After 1836, few births took place, & of the children born most died within the first month... The Aborigines were

not willing to bring children into a world they no longer understood.'

Two years after the Federation of Australia in 1901, Barak died aged 85. The last full blood of the Yarra Tribes, died on August 15-1903 as the wattles came into bloom, as his father had before him.

Under the old wooden bridge in Warrandyte, Aboriginal people were cooking Magpies in earth ovens, as late the 1930's. 'Warrandyte' means 'to throw at a target'. Perhaps this was an Aboriginal sporting area. Was Aussie Rules invented after two white blokes witnessed a game played by Aboriginal people with a ball made from possum skins. I can imagine the Pound Bend ringing to the shouts of impassioned sportsmen & perhaps women, baraking for the Bronzewing footballers. It is believed that the word 'mark' came from the Aboriginal game which paid the same advantage to the catcher of a ball kicked by the foot, as Aussie Rules.



Acacia leprosa

Cinnamon Wattle

Bronzewing pigeons, the Wonga Vine (another plant of this has been found in the Park, now we have two.) the Cinamon wattle, the Orchids of the ridgetops, the beautiful RED Box & all of us to appreciate it.

SCOTT COUTTS



Scott Coutts has been at Warrandyte State Park longer than any staff of the C.F.L.. Eight years at least, & no-one has left quite a legacy as Scott has.

Collection & propagation of local indigenous plants was Scott's special contribution to the flora's conservation. His generous friendliness was his contribution to the local fauna (that's us).

Scott is moving down to his favourite land, the coast. Scott will be stationed at Lange Warren. With him will go so much accumulated information about the Park that I think some effort should be made to record his knowledge about the whereabouts of certain rare plants, seed collection & propagation.

Scott has done his bit to see that the wattle will blossom again. Good Luck Scott.



THIS YEAR WHO?

As you may know, Glen is about to depart to destinations half known, & the frinds need a few people to become a leader for a day. All you have to do is.....

1. Ring the Rangers & arrange tools & access.
2. Welcome the Friends & show them what to do
3. Met the guest speaker & introduce them.

The phoning should be done early on the week of the Friends. You must know the minimum about the job (simple) . You must turn up at noon Warrandyte time. Already some of the jobs have been taken. Ring up now before I ring you & offer your services. Just one day of the year is all you need to deliver. The Rangers are only too willing to help. The experience will make you feel good all week.

The task is a simple one but very necessary. The programme this year is a culmination of many years effort & continued attempt to help heal the damage that has been done to the Park. Do your bit to make sure the wattle is planted again. ONE DAY.

Ranger swapangers

By DAVID WYMAN

Warrandyte conservation groups are angry at the sudden transfer of Ken Gurney, the popular ranger-in-charge of Warrandyte State Park. After about 2½ years in the job, Ken was transferred sideways on January 1 to be a Fisheries and Wildlife technical officer.

Local environmentalists are particularly upset because the transfer happened quickly in the festive period. They, and others, are concerned that Ken Gurney has left the job in the midst of preparation of the management plan for the Warrandyte State Park.

They have protested about the transfer to senior officers of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, and to the Minister, Joan Kirner. These appear to have brought an assurance that Ken will be used from time to time in the planning phase of the park until the draft management plan is completed.

But Warrandyte people want him back.

At least two meetings of representatives of local groups were held before Christmas and letters of protest to the minister and verbal protests to the department have produced negative answers.

The official reason for Ken's transfer appears to be that it is a natural progression in his career path and that his "positive attributes" will be fully made use of in his new role of protecting commercial and recreational fisheries and reducing the illegal trafficking in native wildlife. But locals believe that there have been continuing dif-

ferences between Ken and some of his superiors.

Glen Jameson, co-ordinator of the Friends of Warrandyte State Park, says he was shocked when told that Ken was being taken out of the park. Glen has a close relationship with all the park rangers and asks: "What has he done?"

"This sort of thing just doesn't happen, particularly when he is so well liked and is in the middle of the management plan. He is one of the most resourceful people I have known. When he applied for the job he was thought to be perfect for it. He still is."

"He grew up in the area and has always been involved with the land. The practical things he and his team have done have put the park on the right pathway. He inspired his staff and handled them well, as far as I'm concerned."

Glen Jameson's concern is shared by others: the Warrandyte Environment League, local committees, clubs, scouts, guides and others, numbering 19, who signed a letter of protest to Joan Kirner.

They said that Ken Gurney "is held in the highest regard by the Warrandyte community and has shown rare empathy for our environment and the people who live here." They appealed to the minister to look into the circumstances of his transfer and "try to see that it is in the interests of the park and people of Warrandyte that his great ability should be retained here."

Acting Minister Neil Trezise replied that he was confident that this change was in the best interests of conservation and the wider community.

The protesting group is annoyed and dissatisfied with this response, saying that "it is obvious that Joan Kirner has not been involved." As the *Diary* went to press, they were seeking a meeting with her.

We questioned Jim Allinson, manager of the Melbourne region of the department, about the transfer. He replied in a letter to the editor, which is published in this issue.

And that management plan? It appears to have fallen into a hole, but maybe temporarily. Some of the key people who have been involved in it, apart from Ken, have left or have been on sick leave. Deadlines



Summer on the Yarra near Tills Drive. A 8 water. And not a tall ship in sight.

Jim Allinson says that a new appointment will be made as soon as possible. Chris Worrall, who has been second in charge for the past two years, is acting ranger-in-charge. He and three other rangers are caring for our park.

Glen Jameson says: "Warrandyte State Park is close to head office and is just too much under the magnifying glass. Rangers just don't get moved like this."

Meanwhile local groups are determined to have Ken Gurney reinstated.

LETTERS

Reasons for Gurney move

Thank you for your invitation of (sic) making a statement to your readers on the changed role of Ken Gurney from Ranger-in-Charge at Warrandyte State Park to technical officer, Fisheries and Wildlife. Both positions are within this Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands and the Melbourne region, for which I am responsible.

This is not an issue for public debate. Ken's positive attributes of public relations, interpretations and enforcement of acts and regulations will be fully utilised in his new role. This work of assisting to protect commercial and recreational fisheries and reducing illegal trafficking of native wildlife will provide opportunity for development of his career. His further training and development will be supported, including his continuing attendance at the B.Appl.Sc degree course at the Rusden Campus of Victoria College. Ken and I have agreed to

special arrangements which support him in the transition period.

Warrandyte State Park management does not depend on any one member of staff but rather this flows from the entire staff at the park, region and the department, including the National Parks and Wildlife Division (responsible for statewide policy) working co-operatively with the community. Most of the recent improvements in the park, including roading (sic), office accommodation, depot facilities, water supply, and activities such as the "comet walk" "music festival" and importantly the current planning process is a result of this interaction.

Concern in the community at the transfer of ranger staff to other work centres in the state is unnecessary, given that movement is essential for the long-term training and development of staff. This is particularly important for those who intend to make their career in the technical area of natural resource management.

Irrespective of staff changes, resources will be made available to have the draft plan completed as scheduled in April-May. Ken Gurney will be involved in the production of the draft. Since Ken started his new work the planners have commenced regular meetings with park staff to good effect. This will ensure that the present staff are

committed to the plan and that it is a plan that can be practically implemented.

A new appointment will be made as soon as possible.

J.F. Allinson.

MAMMAL SURVEY

Cam Beardsal from the Arthur Rylah Institute will be conducting a mammal survey of the area during March. Most of his work will take him into the Park.

Here is an opportunity for you to see our native animals as you've never before seen them. In real life, at the end of a spotlight.

Imagine catching a Sugar Glider in flight across the forest night. Perhaps a Tuan? Maybe a Bent-Wing Bat! Hear *Macropus giganteus* stamp their big feet in a warning to the other Grey Kangaroos that some other animal is in the forest at night. What about the Bandicoots, *Antechinus*, White-footed Dunnart, the cuddly *Phascogale cinereus*.

Cam will be needing volunteers to help with his survey, checking traps, spotlighting & such, so if you are interested contact Glen on 8442395 & Cam will be given your name. Should be great fun.



MANAGEMENT PLAN

Val Polley is busy adding material to the Warrandyte State Park Management Plan. She is the sole survivor of the original team of five. Val has been given a part time worker to help her get the Plan into shape & Joan Kirner has given her promise that Ken Gurney will be returning to work on the Plan.

The Friends have put in their submission as have many groups & individuals. Next meeting our submission will be on display for discussion & anything more we wish to add.

Joan Kirner further promised to get whatever staff is necessary to get the Plan back on the road to recovery. It certainly has been a spectacle for the community groups who have watched the fracturing & fighting that has gone on around the Plan. It has been an illuminating & particularly gruesome sight of Public Service infights & Bureaucratic brutishness. It gives us deep doubts about the viability of the cumbersome super department of C.F.L.

The first draft of the Plan is now expected sometime in June with the final draft around September. The Friends only hope that the Project Planner has sufficient empathy with our environment for we are as much of the environment as is the trees.

THE YARRA BOOK

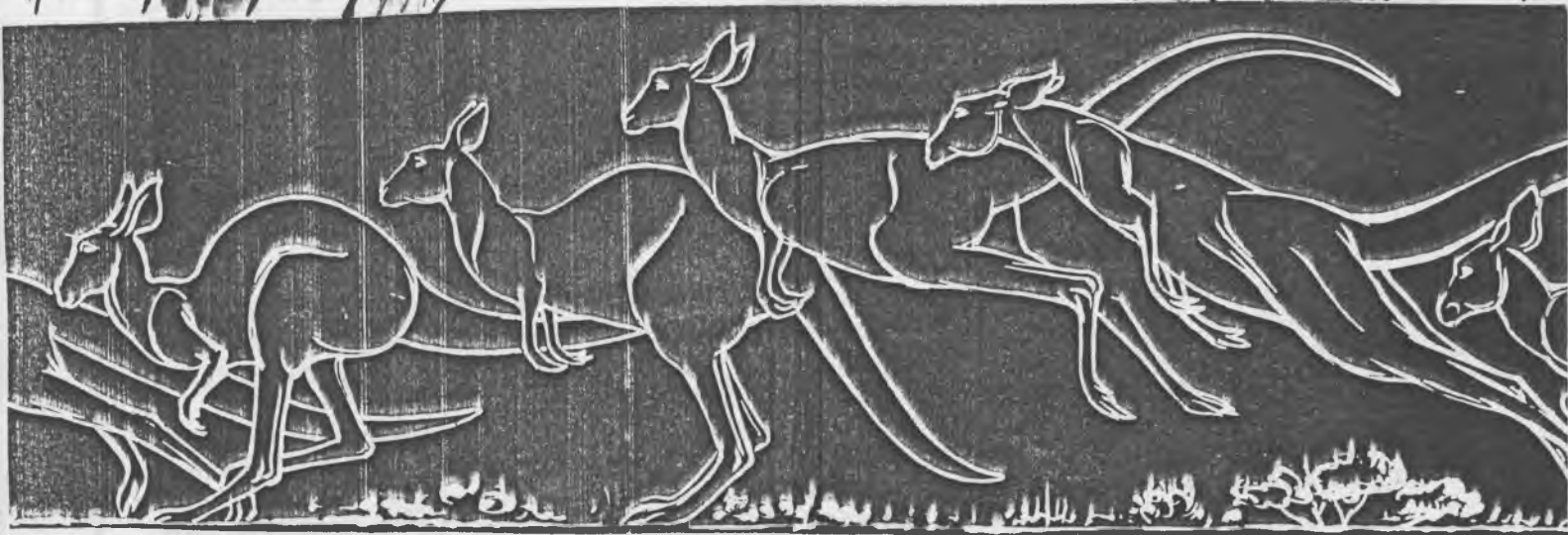
RELEASE OF AN URBAN WILDLIFE GUIDE FOR THE YARRA BY THE M.M.B.W.

A pocket sized, jam packed with colour photos & drawings, information charged Guide to the Yarra River & its local tributaries is now on the market from the Manor at Westerfolds Park, Fitzsimmons Lane. It will probably be available from the Conservation Display at the Festival next month. Well worth the purchase. Congratulations to Georgie Waterman & all the staff involved on the Project.



"When the earth is sick and the animals disappear, the Warriors of the Rainbow will join together to protect the wild creatures and to heal the earth."

— from an old American Indian legend.



POST OFFICE
21 FEB
1988
916-3130

